

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7208

INFO ALL US CONSULATES IN MEXICO VIA POUCH

UNCLAS MEXICO 11393

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, MX

SUBJECT: PROPOSED HUNGER STRIKE BY PRISONERS-VISIT TO LOS REYES

REF: MEXICO 11320

1. CONSUL GENERAL AND CHIEF OF CONSULAR SECTION VISITED LOS REYES WOMEN'S PRISON SEPTEMBER 2 AND MET WITH ABOUT 25 OR 30 OF THE 41 AMERICAN PRISONERS THERE. PRISONERS AT FIRST WERE COOL AND RESERVED, BUT LATER CLUSTERED AROUND CLOSELY TO PEPPER CONOFFS WITH QUESTIONS, FIRST ON TRANSFER OF SANCTIONS PROPOSAL, THEN ON QUESTIONS RELATED TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL CASES. NONE OF THE PRISONERS MENTIONED THE PROPOSED HUNGER STRIKE. WHEN THE QUESTION WAS RAISED BY CONSUL GENERAL NONE INDICATED WHETHER OR NOT THEY INTEND TO PARTICIPATE. ONLY IN PARTIN, WHEN CONOFFS MENTIONED DANCE PERFORMANCE BY LOS REYES DANCE TROUPE SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 9, ONE PRISONER INDICATED THAT THERE MIGHT NOT BE A DANCE PERFORMANCE. OTHERS DISAGREED, BUT SAID THAT PERHAPS NOT ALL DANCERS WOULD PERFORM.

2. REACTION OF WOMEN PRISONERS WAS WARM AND FRIENDLY, IN MARKED CONTRAST TO LATER VISITS WITH MEN AT SANTA MARTA AND RECLUSORIO DEL NORTE. AS WITH THE MEN AT ORIENTE, THEY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE VISIT AND BEGGED FOR MORE FREQUENT DISCUSSIONS OF THIS TYPE TO KEEP THEM INFORMED. THEIR QUESTIONS ON TRANSFER OF SANCTIONS PROPOSAL CENTERED ON STATUS OF NEGOTIATIONS, HOW RAPIDLY THEY MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO PROGRESS, AND CONDITIONS
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UNDER WHICH THEY MIGHT EXPECT TO BE IMPRISONED IN THE U.S.

IF TRANSFER AGREEMENT IS IMPLEMENTED. LIKE THE MEN PRISONERS AT ORIENTE, THEY BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN PUNISHED ENOUGH, AND HOPE DESPERATELY FOR APPLICATION OF GENEROUS PAROLE PROCEDURES ONCE IN THE U.S., IF NOT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME FORM OF APPEAL OR RETRIAL THROUGH THE U.S. COURT SYSTEM.

3. WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO JUDGE THE DEGREE OF SUPPORT AT LOS REYES FOR HUNGER STRIKE. THE PRISONERS WHO DECLINED TO APPEAR (PERHAPS 10 TO 15) MAY REPRESENT THE HARD CORE SUPPORTERS OF STRIKE. THOSE PRISONERS WHO ATTENDED MEETING APPEARED MORE REALISTIC AND LESS BENT ON MARTYRDOM THAN THE MEN AT ORIENTE, BUT PERHAPS THEY MERELY CHOSE TO CONCEAL THEIR INTENTIONS. ALSO, THERE ARE SEVERAL PRISONERS AT LOS REYES WHO HAVE ONLY A FEW MONTHS MORE BEFORE THEIR RELEASE DATES, AND THEY ARE LESS LIKELY TO JEOPARDIZE THEIR CHANCES FOR RELEASE THAN THOSE WHOSE HOPES ARE MORE DISTANT.
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